CRYSTAL PARK SCHOOL

SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION

1988 January

Alberta
EDUCATION
Grande Prairie Regional Office

500 Nordic Court, 10014 - 99 Street, Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada T8V 3N4 403/538-5130

1988 August 15

Mr. D. Taylor
Superintendent of Schools
Grande Prairie School Dist. #2357
10213 - 99 Street
Grande Prairie, Alberta
T8V 2H3

Dear Mr. Tayler:

On behalf of Alberta Education, we are pleased to submit to you and the Board of Trustees, this report on the evaluation of the Special Education programs at Crystal Park School. Consistent with the monitoring function of the Regional Office in the Management and Finance Plan, we are asking that a progress report relative to the recommendations herein be submitted to the Regional Office of Education in approximately six months.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss the report in more detail should you wish. Please convey the thanks of the evaluation team to the staff and students for their courtesies during the visit.

Sincerely,

Fred Reinholt
Director

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EVALUATION TEAM

Que Chang, Chairman
Alberta Education, ROE
Grande Prairie, Alberta
(GL PII/Administration/Resource Rooms)

Sandra Shepitka
Alberta Education, ROE
Grande Prairie, Alberta
(Preschool Intervention
Early Intervention)

Ken Pidwysocki
Alberta Education, ROE
Calgary, Alberta
(Preschool Intervention
Early Intervention)

Jim McClellan
Alberta Education, ROE
Edmonton, Alberta
(Dependent Handicapped)

Carl Simonson
Alberta Education, ERC
Edmonton, Alberta
(Hearing Impaired)

Rick Morrow
Alberta Education, ROE
Calgary, Alberta
(Administration)

David Ford
Alberta Education, ROE
Calgary, Alberta
(Intergration)

ADMINISTRATION

The administrative team operates as an effective unit helping the staff to meet the needs of special education students at the school. Administrative style is perceived as open and supportive with ample opportunity provided for solving problems in a collegial fashion. A trans-disciplinary model (described later) is followed and has proven to be effective in guiding the provision of special services.

Crystal Park School serves a total of 584 students in both regular and special education programs. Of the total population approximately 115 students have special learning needs. Some of these children with special needs are from other school jurisdictions in Zone 1. One unique feature of the school is the team of specialists who provide therapy services for students in the school as well as outreach services to students in other school systems.

The following table illustrates the number of students and staff at the school.

Students		Staff	
Regular			
ECS	39	ECS teachers	1.0
Elem	249	Elementary teachers	12.5
Jr. High	173	Junior High teachers	11.0
		ECS Teacher Assistant	1.0
Special Education			
ECS	13	Teachers	10.0
Elem & Jr. High	110	Professional staff	13.0
		Teacher Assistants	36.0

The figures in these tables are only approximate. Exact numbers are hard to determine because of the complex, interdependant nature of the staff allocation and programs.

The special education program at the school was evaluated by a team of consultants from Alberta Education. Visits were made to the school during the week of January 25, 1988. The purpose of the evaluation was to review special education programs and related administrative services and to provide, to the Board of Trustees, a report containing commendations and recommendations.

A number of procedures were used by the evaluation team to gather information for the report. Parents of students in the regular and the special education programs were invited to respond to a questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with teachers, teacher assistants, students, and school administrators. Phone interviews were also conducted with a small number of parents. Classroom activities were observed by the evaluators.

The report is divided into nine sections. A review of the school operation and administrative services for special education is first, followed by reports on integration in the school and on each of the special education programs. The appendix contains summaries of the survey results.

School Operation and Administrative Services

The administrative team at Crystal Park School is composed of a principal, three vice-principals, and a business manager. One vice-principal is given primary responsibility for the special services programs and staff. The other vice-principals have responsibility for basic education programs and staff, and for outreach and specialist services. The business manager, as a member of the administrative team, has responsibility for money-related matters and the non-professional staff. Administrative decisions and policies are made by the team and staff members support the opinion that the school administration operates as a unified, effective team.

The school's support staff includes four secretaries, one receptionist, eight custodians, and thirty-six teacher assistants.

School Philosophy

The school administrators are committed to the school philosophy which emphasizes, in part, the education of all children to their fullest potential in a supportive environment.

The school administrators subscribe to the primary notion of the Cascade model of education in which all children are provided with education services in the least restrictive and most enabling school environment possible They operate as an effective team in furthering the school philosophy. **The administrators are commended for developing an effective team approach to successfully meet the many challenges faced in the development of comprehensive programs and services for all students, and particularly those students with special needs.**

One principle that emerges from the school philosophy is that school activities are focused on the education of all children. A trans-disciplinary approach to the education of special needs students is followed. Teachers of special and regular education programs that contain integrated students are expected to manage the programs for students with special needs. This involves directing teacher assistants, interacting with professional support staff (therapists etc.), and implementing recommendations to address individual student needs. Professional therapists and paraprofessionals are expected to provide their services within an education context and, if necessary, subject to the direction of the teacher responsible for a particular program. **A collegial, partnership approach is successfully followed with respect to the planning and delivery of programs for handicapped children.**

One example of the collegial approach used at the school is the development of a policy handbook through the work of a committee. Committees of school staff members have developed policies and procedures to guide school operations in the special program areas. While the handbook needs some work on format, the policies have been used to effectively guide program operation. It is suggested that the administration clarify the format of the policy handbook and continue to work with staff to develop clear, workable policies. Because of the detail in existing policies, it is suggested that a pamphlet be developed in which policies and special programs are described to help orient new staff and parents to the school.

The school board, central office and school administrators, and staff are commended for planning and developing a workable, effective trans-disciplinary approach for the education of students with exceptional learning needs. A significant amount of time and effort has been expended on the approach to special education which benefits students and parents.

Communication

The administration has developed a number of formal and informal methods to communicate policies and procedures.

The school administrators are viewed by the staff and parents as being receptive, and supportive. Parents are encouraged to visit the school at their convenience and staff members are encouraged to discuss any issues and concerns directly with the administrators.

The challenges in providing special education services for students are recognized by administrators who encourage staff members to discuss

any issues or concerns directly with them. **The administrators are commended for developing supportive procedures for receiving information from the staff and for resolving problems in a positive way.**

In addition to daily bulletins for the school staff, information about special and regular programs is shared during monthly staff meetings. The administrators also meet once each week to discuss the school operation and any emergent concerns.

A need exists to schedule regular meetings with special education teachers. Plans have recently been formulated to hold monthly meetings of the special education staff to discuss concerns and to share information with respect to programs.

Instructional Leadership

The coordination of student placements, program implementation and monitoring in special education is assigned to one vice-principal. Closer monitoring of long-range goals may be required as noted below.

Significant effort by the administrators has been devoted to the development policies and procedures to guide the operation of the special programs. While program policy is in place, it is suggested that renewed attention be given to the development of school goals and objectives. Although some discussion with the board has occurred, it is suggested that a process of goal setting be initiated to guide the direction that the school may follow in the future.

Staff Development

Extensive professional development opportunities are provided to the school staff. On the basis of questionnaire and interview responses, no gaps were found to exist in professional development. Staff members are

supported in attending out-of-district conferences and, in some cases, individual staff members are requested by the system to attend special workshops.

School level inservices have been facilitated by a procedure in which the first Monday of each month is used for professional development activity. Although originally intended for the inservice of teaching assistants, the inservice day has been used for the inservice of all staff members including regular program and special education teachers, and therapists upon request. **The board is to be commended for its generous support for the professional development of the staff.**

A practice is followed at the school whereby teacher assistants may be rotated among job assignments. The school administration and many staff members support the concept of changing program assignments as one method to develop skills, because of the demands of training. The practice of rotating teacher assistants is reported as adding to the difficulty of providing special programs. Although this may create initial difficulties in program operation, it would appear that the practice of rotating aides precludes the dependance of children on adults and the practice fosters the development of independent behavior. The issue tends to be controversial issue; however, because of the benefits in terms of flexibility of staff, greater job security for teacher assistants, efficiency of teacher assistance usage, and most importantly the principle of decisions based on student need, this policy is supported. Due to the need for training, consideration should be given to extending the period before rotation to three years in some specialized programs.

Through interviews and questionnaires, some teachers indicate a need for support mechanisms to assist them in dealing with stress and in

acquiring the skills needed for managing and working with a number of adults (professional support staff, teacher assistants and parents). These concerns have been recognized to some extend by the administration and an inservice dealing with management skills has already been offered. A future meeting has been planned to focus on the need for staff members to offer mutual collegial support.

In this school there are a number of factors that may make teaching more stressful; however, the gains in the program offered to the students far outweigh this drawback. Nevertheless, this problem should be approached overtly and consideration should be given to trying more strategies to deal with this problem.

Staff Evaluation

A comprehensive staff evaluation plan exists in the school. All teachers are evaluated according to established policy and teachers are expected to evaluate paraprofessionals assigned to their programs. One vice-principal has primary responsibility for preliminary evaluations of the professional support staff, who are evaluated in depth by representatives from their respective professional associations. Two speech therapists received an in-depth evaluation last year and one of the occupational therapists is currently undergoing an evaluation.

The special education teachers are evaluated according to the school district policy. This means that teachers are evaluated during each of their first two years and once every five years thereafter. Some teachers expressed a need for additional information concerning their performance. Teachers interviewed during the evaluation reported a need for additional feedback on teaching performance outside of the formal, summative

evaluation procedures presently followed. Periodic informal meetings between an administrator and each special education teacher to discuss the program may assist in addressing this need.

Teacher assistants are evaluated by the teachers of the respective programs and supervision is jointly done by teachers and the business manager.

The administration has done a commendable job of developing a comprehensive evaluation plan.

Resources

Learning resources at the school are reported by the staff to be adequate. A "donation fund" exists because of donations from the community service groups and private individuals. This fund can be accessed if supplies are needed in any program. Each program in the special education department has a budget for purchasing supplies. **The community of Grande Prairie is commended for its generous support of this program. The teachers in this school are commended for freely sharing resources and information with each other.**

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The administration and staff continue to work to clarify the format and organization of the policy handbook.
2. The administration and staff develop a pamphlet, containing a description of programs and policy, for use in orienting parents and new staff members.
3. The practice of holding regular staff meetings of special education teachers be implemented in order to further enhance communication.
4. The administration implement a process whereby school goals are discussed and established.
5. That, as part of the evaluation process, additional feedback be provided to teachers concerning teaching practices.

INTEGRATION

The staff of Crystal Park School are providing individual education for a variety of severe to moderate special needs students and, to a lesser extent, for regular students. A considerable degree of enthusiasm, commitment and self-imposed high expectations is shown by the staff as individuals and as a team. Goal setting, program planning, and monitoring are ongoing processes resulting from a commendable team effort.

The staff identify with the processes of integration and mainstreaming. Considerable use is made of professional specialists to facilitate this. **All staff members are to be commended for their dedication and quest to providing the most suitable individual education for each special needs student.**

Procedures For Review

To determine integration practices, and procedures at Crystal Park School teachers, administrators, and professional support staff members were interviewed. A survey was also conducted providing opportunities for both regular and special education teachers to comment on integration practices. Several handicapped students were also tracked during their daily routine from the time of their arrival at school, through their attendance in regular classes, to their return to their special class. Observations were also made of regular classes into which special needs students were integrated, providing opportunities for the teacher and regular students to comment on integration. Finally, the processes of integration (mainstreaming and normalization) are viewed from the point of view of the current literature.

Previous Experience of Staff With Integration

A wide range of experience with integration exists among the staff. Most teachers indicate their first experience with integration was at Crystal Park School. Teacher assistants report experience of two or more years with settings in which dependant handicapped children were integrated using a "buddy system" for recess and lunch.

Integration Philosophy and Policy

The school policy handbook contains a brief description of mainstreaming and integration. The mainstreaming process is defined as "a special needs student (who) receives his education in a regular classroom." The definition of integration is basically the same; that is, integration "occurs in a setting designed to educate both special needs and non-handicapped students." The two terms should be more clearly distinguished and operationally defined.

Most staff members indicate that the integration philosophy provides the opportunity for all students to experience schooling in as normal an environment as their conditions allow and that integration should permit every possible opportunity for a child to achieve in a stimulating environment. Additionally, it is felt that integration should provide a child with an opportunity to function in a regular classroom setting, and should encourage natural interaction between all students.

The least restrictive environment is addressed in the school policy handbook (Section 7). Here, the fundamental purposes of special education are stated, including optimal individual development of life skills and management within the regular public school framework. No

operational definition of "least restrictive environment" relating to the classroom is provided.

Some aspects of the policy relating to the least restrictive environment are debatable; for example, least restrictive environment in this definition means as close to the regular classroom situation as possible. However, it can be argued that for some handicapped youngsters the regular classroom may be the most restrictive setting. Some suggestions are provided in the appendix for discussion and consideration.

The Cascade Model of Service Deliver

The special education Cascade based on E. Deno's model (Deno 1970) has been adopted by the board and Crystal Park School as the service delivery model and is illustrated in the policy handbook.

Levels 1-5 of the Cascade model operate at the school. Students at level 5 exhibit severe behavior disorders (autistic) and are restricted initially to a special station with time out procedures offering consequences for appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Level 4 at Crystal Park School includes Educable and Trainable Mentally Handicapped (EMH and TMH) students. The staff is commended for its efforts to integrate these severe behavior and problem learning students. At level 2, severely learning disabled students are served by resource room assistance and partial integration. Consideration could be given to integrating some of these students into the regular class (with a small enrollment) and with the assistance of the resource teacher using the consultative model. This type of class is called the Combination Class (Guerin, Statlocy 1978) and may work effectively in this school because the regular classes have relatively low enrolments and regular program teachers have a positive attitude towards integration.

The Integration Process For Students

Placement in regular classes is based on students' abilities, needs and age. The needs are assessed by therapists and teachers through individual and group teacher case conferences, and placement is decided by the administration. Placements are made during May and June of each year. Input is sought from medical, rehabilitative, educational and parent sources. Consistent procedures are in place and are continually being improved. Integration into the regular classroom is limited only by the students ability to "grow" from the experience.

Total integration involves full-time attendance in regular class with most activities developed, organized and monitored by the teacher assistant. Academic activities unique to the handicapped student are carried out with special devices and with one-to-one attention from the teaching assistant. Good use of computer-assisted instruction is made which regular students could also utilize. The best examples of integration occurred during the aquatic lessons, where the supervisor is to be commended for totally adapting the Red Cross swimming program for handicapped students. **The commendable practice of bringing regular students into segregated settings to assist and provide role models should be extended wherever practicable.** Consideration should be given to increasing the level of social integration Little social interaction is possible during class time as the regular students are actively involved with the regular curriculum. More cross tutoring activities by regular students could take place. These could include activities such as listening, reading, writing and spelling (using adaptive devices).

Regular students that were interviewed indicated that they enjoy having the handicapped students in class. They take turns using the buddy system which provides opportunities for regular students to assist, especially with wheelchairs, at opening, recess and lunchtime.

Some teachers have made considerable effort to train themselves in strategies that would facilitate integration, for example signing and using computer-assisted instruction. The challenge, as one teacher indicated, is to communicate effectively with the group while signing to the special needs student without slowing down the pace of the lesson at the expense of group interest. The biggest challenge is to involve handicapped students more in academic activities either by cross tutoring, curriculum modification, or introducing an individualized program for all students. The teachers are commended for their on-going efforts to integrate handicapped students.

The administration are continually attempting to improve the procedures for integration and placement. In the April, May and June a focus is placed on student placement for the following school year. The process is facilitated by a series of student information forms to be completed by teachers, special services teachers, regular education teachers with fully integrated students, and early intervention specialists. An Integration Survey determines the student needs and the number of integrated students and addresses current and projected integration needs. A Student Information Form assists in the transfer of the fully integrated special needs student from one grade to another. It provides an overview of the students educational program, therapy and equipment needs. In addition to internal students the 1987

placement review also included special education need students from all jurisdictions in the intake area.

The administration is commended for the considerable time and effort spent on developing reliable intake and integration procedures and for seeking ways to improve these procedures.

A Grade 9 course for regular students, Working with the Special Needs Child, provides an introduction to special needs students and rotates students through various special programs. Special education issues and concerns are discussed by students and teachers. The course culminates with practical experience in working with a special needs child. **The staff is commended for introducing this course which provides for an important aspect of integration - the understanding of special needs children by regular pupils.**

Students Selected For Integration

Referrals are received at Crystal Park School from other schools and from teachers and parents, after which they are included in the placement process described above. Students already enrolled at Crystal Park School are considered for integration when behavior, social and academic skills improve to the point where they do not significantly interfere with regular class placement. Placement meetings involve all teachers, therapists and parents.

Coordination of Staff In The Integration Process

All staff members involved with the integration students attend a Case Conference coordinated by an administrator, to discuss the students' strengths and weaknesses. Weekly meetings are also held to assist the communication between the various staff members. The

teacher is seen by staff as the key person coordinating the program, requesting assessments and following the therapist's recommendations.

Types of meetings include case conferences, interdepartmental meetings and consultations between teachers and teaching assistants.

The attempts to coordinate activities have improved but some specialists feel that more improvement is needed. Some teachers feel that more time should be available for professional consultation with the teaching assistants. Coordination meetings seek to determine student needs, program times, and details of all aspects of the child's time at school. The classroom teacher facilitates the social and management aspects of the child program and the special education teacher generates and monitors the individual educational plans with input from the specialists.

Student Information Shared With Receiving Teacher

All available information relating to occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech, aquatics and academics is shared with teachers, usually in June when decisions are made for September placement. Following the case conference the teacher receives reports containing suggestions and programs to meet short and long-term goals from the therapists. Suggestions relating to special feeding, seating arrangements, medical conditions, and behavior management are also included. Some staff specialists indicate that more consistent information may be required for teachers. Comprehensive files are located in the school office. As aides provide the major service delivery to many of the special needs it would be appropriate to invite aides to the case conferences.

Monitoring The Progress of Integrated Students

Educational progress of the integrated student is shared through verbal exchanges, actual written or "hands on" work taken back by the student to the homeroom, report cards, and detailed daily records. Teachers monitor the individual goals of the program and meet together to review student goals and objectives are conducted every three to four months or when the need arises. Regular discussions between staff members is encouraged and problems are quickly brought to the attention of the administration or the therapists. Some specialists feel that closer and more consistent monitoring is needed in some cases to prevent "crisis management." There does appear to be some confusion over the purpose of student monitoring and student evaluation, and these procedures may need clarification. Where monitoring occurs, the Individual Program Plan (IPP) plays a focal role. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and vision programs are monitored regularly. **The teachers and specialists are commended for making strong efforts to monitor student progress in education, speech and hearing and communicating these results to all stakeholders involved with the child.**

Subject Areas Into Which Students Are Integrated

Students who are "academically able" are integrated into all subject areas. Lower functioning students enroll in music, library, art, gym, industrial arts, and home economics. Age, safety, and ability to benefit from the program are considered when integrating students. Occasionally, exceptions are made at parent request. Appropriate classes in science also provide concrete experiences. Social integration occurs at lunch, recess and noon hours. Some Dependent Handicapped students are taking part only during lunch, recess and

music. Severe Learning Disabled students are enrolled for a variety of subjects depending on student needs whereas physically handicapped students usually are enrolled for the total program except for specific therapy programs.

The Role of the Principal

The teachers view the principal as supportive, and as ensuring that all programs are being followed. The principal is seen as a "trouble shooter" for the staff. Teachers also feel that successes can be shared with the principal. The principal monitors and supervises the program so that the staff works as a team toward the goal of integration through staffing, schooling and public relations.

The Role of the Parent

The staff feels that parents should be involved in the program by showing interest, and commitment to the child's program and total welfare. They should also be available for conferences when needed. Where possible parents are used as program volunteers. Parent's advice is sought when needed on integration and program objectives and strategies. Whenever possible, parent's requests are met. If requests are not met, parents are advised of their right to appeal the placement. The parent's main role is to support the school and the goal of integration. Staff members indicate that without this support the program would not work. Parent volunteers are commended for their commitment and the staff is commended for facilitating this strategy. It might be desirable to increase the involvement of parents at the critical stages of program planning when IPP's are being developed especially as

they are expecting the parents to encourage generalization of the skills being developed to occur between the home and the school.

The Role of the Special Education Teacher

The special education teacher coordinates IPP planning refers students for specialist involvement, provides support for the regular teacher for planning and monitoring progress. The learning resource teacher provides instruction to regular students who have learning disabilities in a pull out program. The special education teacher writes, monitors and evaluates the IPP.

The Role of the Receiving Teacher

The role of the receiving teacher, as seen by other staff members, is that of planning an appropriate program, with the assistance of specialists, to support the principles of integration, and acting as a coordinator of all persons involved with a student. The teacher is expected to know the child's needs and special program objectives, to maintain progress records, and to be available for case consultation. The teacher is also seen to provide feedback to the student and provide a gradient of difficulty in a variety of assignments.

Recommendations

Based on observation, results and suggestions by staff members at Crystal Park School, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Produce a brief, illustrated parent handbook describing in non-technical terms the total program, the role of the staff and parents, the types of programs offered (regular and special), and regular school events.

2. Revise and clarify the policy statements based on the principles of integration. Policy statements and district operational

definitions should be developed for integration, mainstreaming, normalization, and the least restrictive education setting.

3. Increase parental involvement in program planning, implementation and monitoring.

4. Move towards more individualized programs in the regular grades that would also facilitate some special needs students integrating academically.

5. Consider using an index of integration in the school, (see Appendix) and introduce an approach to determine the effectiveness of integration.

6. Increase involvement of regular teachers in the instruction of the integrated student to reduce dependence on the teacher assistant and to facilitate skill generalization.

7. Consider reducing the partial resource room segregation in an integrated setting, by enrolling these S.L.D. students in a "combination" class and modifying the role of the Resource Room teacher to involve more consulting. (See Guerin -- Appendix).

8. Clarify the role of evaluation and monitoring of student progress, and determine the need for more consistent and closer monitoring in some cases.

9. Examine ways to improve the generalization of behavior skills learned by dependent handicapped students to other staff members.

10. Increase specialist input during transition, integration, and monitoring of special needs students.

11. Provide opportunities and strategies for more reintegration into home schools according to the principle of least restrictive setting.

12. Give consideration to some form of rotation to prevent specialist and teacher "burn out".

13. Determine an optimal regular class size depending on instructional variables such as classroom physical size, special equipment, and all student needs.

14. Encourage parents to become involved in follow-up, especially using the same strategies, following placement in the school behavioral programs.

DEPENDENT HANDICAPPED

Dependent handicapped students in Crystal Park School are in the very fortunate position of being served in a program which incorporates the highest levels of specialist and teacher aide support, program coordination, teacher training, and physical resources. The quality of the program is reflected in the gains in skill development that the students attain over time. In general, the D.H. program is an exemplary program that requires few adjustments to ensure that the current status is maintained.

The program for dependent handicapped (D.H.) students is provided to two groups of students who exhibit severe mental disability frequently associated with a physical and/or behavioral disability. The students are housed in two separate classrooms according to age. The junior classroom consists of students aged 4 to 10 years; while the senior class consists of students aged 11 to 17 years.

Two full-time teachers and seven teacher aides work with a total of twelve students. One of the aides is assigned full-time to a student who is integrated into a Grade 3 classroom for most subject areas. Staffing for the program aims for a teacher/student ratio of 1:1.5. This ratio has been met during the current year. Considering the degree of dependency that these students exhibit, the ratio between adults and students is justifiable and commendable.

The program is largely based on promoting the development of self/care and life/skills, including communication and leisure/skills. Curriculum support materials include Alberta Education's Curriculum Guide for the Dependent Handicapped and Fredrick's Teaching Curriculum for Moderately and Severely Handicapped. The program is designed to

enable the students to develop functional skills rather than to move the student through a developmental sequence of skills which may or may not have a functional application.

Most activities in the junior program take place within the school setting. The focus of the program is directed to self-care skills such as toileting and feeding, however, within the context of these activities the students learn basic cognitive skills such as attending behavior, and receptive and expressive language development, primarily in the form of pic symbols.

The senior program is a continuation of the junior programs, with an emphasis on further developing functional skills further in both the school and the community. Students are regularly provided with the opportunity to leave the school setting and, with the assistance of the aides, to practice skills in a larger community setting such as a shopping centre. Currently, the administration and staff are attempting to develop work experience placements for the students; however, placements had not been established at the time of the evaluation.

Criteria for placement in either program is somewhat vague. It is reported that students who exhibit a sensory, physical or behavioral handicap coupled with a profound mental handicap are candidates for the D.H. program. Adequate of any communication skills appeared to be at a level well beyond the abilities of a profoundly mentally handicapped student. It appears, at least for these students, that the language deficit is the primary reason for placement in the program.

Based on these observations and discussions with the administration and staff in the program, the D.H. program appears to be a program in which students are placed when they seem unable to fit into any other

program. Unfortunately, this procedure reinforces the perception that some students are slotted into existing programs rather than into programs designed for them, which would be more appropriate. Although this is not entirely the case as an IPP is designed for each student, it is recommended that the procedures for making placement decisions be reviewed. To this end, it is further recommended that placement decisions occur through the effort of a placement committee of at least three individuals including a school administrator, a teacher from the dependent handicapped program, and a professional from student support services.

The degree of severity and complexity of the handicapping condition requires the involvement of a variety of specialists. Fortunately, the program has access to school-based specialists in occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy and a psychologist, and a full-time nurse. These services are provided through a trans-disciplinary model which is characterized by coordination between the teacher and specialists, in mutual assessment and goal setting, systematic sharing of information about the child, and role release whereby the specialist frequently provides therapy within the classroom setting rather than separating the student from the classroom to apply therapy.

The trans-disciplinary approach is apparent in the development of each student's IPP. The teacher gathers information about the students needs through therapists' assessments, curriculum checklists and parental input. Subsequently, this information is used to set annual goals and specific, short term objectives. The specialist, in particular, provide specific recommendations regarding program objectives. It is, however, the teacher who sets priorities regarding the goals and objectives in the IPP.

Teacher referrals for assessment are initiated through a referral request form. The form is processed by the vice-principal, who has specific responsibility for special needs students and consults with the specialist. A tracking form informs the teacher that the request is being processed.

Parents are provided with an opportunity to participate in the IPP process at its earliest stages. After the IPP goals and objectives have been established by the teacher in October a copy is forwarded to the parents approximately two weeks before each case conference. During the case conference, which includes the parents, the teacher and involved specialists, the parents have the opportunity to provide suggestions to modify or change goals and objectives for their child. Although special needs aides are not involved in the case conference, it is recommended that the child's aide should be included as an active member of the case conference team. This involvement would allow the aides, particularly those that are experienced, to provide suggestions for the students program and to give the aides a greater sense of responsibility for the student's program.

IPP's have been developed for all students in the D.H. program. The goals and objectives are consistent with the needs of students who function at the level of the severely mentally handicapped. All IPP's are reviewed on a regular basis and modified wherever necessary. Student progress is monitored on a daily basis and recorded through the O'Brian method. This method involves task-analyzing a specific objective and recording the level of prompting required for the student to accomplish a task component. For example, the task of lifting a cup to the mouth to drink may be accomplished through physical assistance

such as the teacher placing his or her hand over the students hand to raise the glass to the mouth or by the simple command, "Drink your juice". The first instance is a physical prompt. The second instance involves a verbal prompt. Of course, the verbal prompt would probably be considered to be the highest level of prompting for this task. Daily journals containing narrative descriptions of student behavior are also maintained for each student. A combination of these two methods is an effective procedure for recording student performance.

Instructional procedures applied in these programs are consistent with instructional procedures that have been widely proven to be effective with D.H. students. These procedures include the application of task analysis, levels of prompting, structured and incidental teaching, attending behavior programs and various reinforcement procedures.

Most of the students are integrated into regular classes for some portion of the instructional day. Although integration is primarily of a social nature, students engage in various activities with the support of an aide or a regular student.

Communication with parents is a strong feature of the program. Reporting activities include the initial IPP meetings, notes to parents everyday, frequent phone calls, scheduled interviews and report cards.

The quality of the D.H. program is further supported by professional development activities for teachers and aides. The first Monday of each month is reserved for professional development activities. Workshops and seminars have included such diverse topics as feeding procedures, behavior modification, and how to conduct a meeting, to name a few. The staff's commitment to continuous professional development is very commendable and ensures the highest possible levels of professional skill development.

The D.H. program is a very demanding program for teachers. Factors such as the constant interaction with the specialists, the supervision of special needs aides and the demanding nature of the student's handicapping condition place an extraordinary strain on the teacher's energies. Over time these strains may have a profound effect on a teacher's personal and professional life. Therefore, it is recommended that the teachers in the D.H. program be provided with the opportunity to be placed in another program after two or three years of service in the D.H. program.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Procedures regarding placement decisions be reviewed and that final decisions for placement be conducted by placement committees.
2. The special needs aides participate in case-conferencing.
3. Teachers in the D.H. program be provided with the opportunity to transfer to another school program every two to three years.

EARLY INTERVENTION

The staff is commended for excellent program record keeping and the high degree of commitment to this program. The files reflect caring and knowledgeable programming for these young children with varying handicapping conditions. The mandate and files of the Early Intervention Program (EIP) were examined but no direct service was observed. Outside assistance is sought for the more handicapped children and files indicate that generally this assistance was obtained. Often therapy services from Crystal Park School are used.

The EIP uses the Vulpe, and although this instrument is rather basic, it gives as much relevant information as is needed to develop an above-average EIP. A shortfall in the services provided appears to be the limited amount of physiotherapy service available to the EIP.

The referral process plays an important role for both the Grande Prairie School District and for the EIP. The mandate of the EIP does not allow involvement with parents who refuse service or with children whose handicapping condition is caused by environmental factors. The consequence of this is that there could be numerous children between zero and two and one-half years of age who have significant problems but do not appear on the EIP case load; they only surface when they become eligible for ECS Program Unit Grant funding or become school-aged. It may prove beneficial if the EIP informs Crystal Park School of all children who are referred rather than just those who become involved the with EIP.

There appears to be open and effective communication between the EIP and the Preschool Intervention Programs. This is commended as it enhances long-term planning and programming for the children.

The Grande Prairie School District is commended for the high level of board support for the EIP and for the administrative time and commitment to the program. Coordinated Support services are in place, but the program has need of more physiotherapy support. The EIP home base at Crystal Park School is most effective with respect to services, administration and focus. A review of the EIP space at Crystal Park may be in order as demands and requirements are changing.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Early Intervention Program acquire additional physiotherapy services.
2. The Early Intervention Program inform the Grande Prairie School District/Crystal Park School of all children referred to the EIP so that the school becomes aware of all "at risk" children and not just those who qualify under the EIP mandate.
3. The space requirements the for EIP at Crystal Park School be reviewed.

GENERAL LEARNING PROBLEMS II

This program was observed while the teacher was absent. A substitute teacher and the teacher aides provided the program. This report is the result of discussions with other school personnel, observation of the students and examination of the few available planning documents. The observations are felt to be a valid reflection of this program because there is close alignment of these observations with those made during a former jurisdiction-organized evaluation in March, 1987.

Generally, this program provides appropriate and valuable instruction to the students. Skills taught are appropriately related to specific fundamental skills needed by the students. Routines and activities indicate that training and appropriate instruction had previously occurred. Some improvement could be made in the area of Individual Pupil Programs and in the area of additional integration.

Crystal Park School operates one GLP II class, a program for the moderately retarded (Educable and Trainable Mentally Handicapped). The District has developed a program philosophy based on meeting the individual needs of students in caring, supportive classroom and school environment and the school has operationalized this philosophy through the principle of providing the least restrictive environment possible. As a result, the "fit" with district, school and program philosophies was found to be both consistent and appropriate.

A total of eight students are enrolled in the program and receive instruction from one teacher and three aides. The aides have been assigned to this program due to the large class enrollment, and considering the needs of the students and the additional individual

needs of two students. One aide is assigned to this program as a general aide, the other two are to assist with one student who is self abusive, and another with severe behavior problems.

Evidence of an effective working relationship was observed. The substitute teacher and the aides had excellent rapport already established with the students and they effectively discharged their specific individual responsibilities with efficiency. Especially commendable was the routine manner in which behavior problems were observed to be handled. In addition, productive use of positive reinforcement was made.

Students were motivated to do well during class activities. Teaching strategies included individual and group teaching. Expectations for behavior were appropriate and the teaching of desired behavior was evident. Classroom routines were well established as demonstrated by the quick involvement of the students in the activities. Appropriate previous teaching objectives were demonstrated by the students' actions in response to the staff's questions and requests. The functional learned skills demonstrated the use of objectives from the mandated curriculum.

Although it was evident, from the classroom observations, that the program incorporated appropriate student objectives, few planning documents were available. Some lesson plans left from early January were available and these tended to be sketchy plans of activities. From these plans it was hard to determine the objectives or concepts.

It was also observed that generally these children were provided with a program apart from other students. Integration for this class,

unlike most in this school, was minimal. Presently, one student is integrated for lunch, recess and physical education. This program should continue to strive for the ideal of further integration.

The students in this program appear to be appropriately placed. Indeed, the administration is commended for applying the criteria stringently thus operationalizing the principal of least restrictive environment. This stringent application of the criteria for EMH and TMH may create differences between this program and other GLP II programs in the jurisdiction; however, this stringent application of the criteria is supported.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The cost-effectiveness of utilizing three aides be examined.
2. Integration be encouraged wherever appropriate.

HEARING IMPAIRED

The Crystal Park School serves six severely/profoundly hearing impaired children ranging in ages from seven to fifteen years. The program is located in a large classroom setting with one teacher. One older student is enrolled in a beauty culture course at the Grande Prairie Composite High School during the mornings and attends the hearing impaired classroom in the afternoon.

In keeping with the school philosophy of integration, all hearing impaired pupils are partially integrated into regular classrooms for various subjects including art, library and physical education. Two students are integrated into regular science classes, one is Grade 2 and the other in Grade 3. All hearing impaired students receive instruction in language arts and mathematics in the segregated classroom.

The hearing impaired program offered at the school is a good program; however, a number of modifications would improve it and would ensure provision of a better program for all the students.

1. <u>Assessments</u>

The school uses a trans-disciplinary model for assessment of all special education students and the classroom teacher is the key member of the assessment team. C.A.S.E. provides assessment and consultation services. Audiological assessments are available from an audiologist employed by the South Peace Health Unit. The Educational Psychologist administers various psychometric tests to ascertain the hearing impaired child's level of cognitive and

psycho-social development. The child's receptive and expressive communication skills are assessed in terms of how they affect his/her behavior, achievement and educational planning.

At the time of the interview three hearing impaired children had been assessed by the psychologist. The practice of having psycho-educational assessments for these students is a good one. However, some consultation regarding the choice of psychometric instruments best suited to the child's ability and therefore, the most likely to provide meaningful information in psychological testing would likely improve the usefulness of these assessments.

The hearing specialist is a well-qualified teacher for the deaf and provides assessments for hearing impaired children in the program. The hearing specialist is the only member of the assessment team who has sign language communication skills.

Assessment and record maintenance procedures are followed. These include parent notification of assessment procedures and signed parental approval for program placement. These procedures are well-founded and well-orchestrated.

2. Physical Facilities

The large classroom has sufficient space to allow for flexibility in arranging work spaces for individual as well as small group instruction. There is adequate space for the needs of six students and three staff members.

Carpet has been installed for noise reduction. The classroom lighting appears satisfactory which is important in reducing glare that could cause problems in speech reading and reading the

blackboard. This is very important for students who rely on vision for communication.

Bulletin boards provide ample space for display of teacher and student-made materials.

These facilities are excellent; the board and administration are commended for their planning and support of this program.

3. Programming for Instruction

One teacher (F.T.E.), one aide (F.T.E.) and two half-time teacher aides provide instruction for the hearing impaired children. The teacher is a trained special education teacher and has taken two sign language courses from a recognized sign language training program. No staff member has training in teaching hearing impaired children and as a result attention is needed in the area of language assessment. More assistance from the speech pathologists on the C.A.S.E. team would help to address this need.

The observed classroom communication was effective in both individual and group situations; however, there is no consistency with sign language A consistent system of signing needs to be implemented.

Two teacher aides demonstrate fluency in sign language skills and are assigned to work on a one-to-one basis with one older student who has a high level of speech communication skills.

Teacher aides in the hearing impaired program serve as interpreter/tutor assisting the children in the segregated classroom and the integrated classrooms. The aide provides a total communication link between the teacher of the hearing impaired and the regular classroom teacher. All aides require fluency in expressive and

receptive sign language skills and these skills take time to develop. It is very important that all the aides have competency in sign language to meet the needs of the children.

3.1 Program Development

The planning and delivery of school subjects is the responsibility of the teacher. The regular curriculum guides as well as the Alberta Education Curriculum Guide for the Hearing Impaired (1983) are used for planning. This is a good practice and is commended.

Two core subjects, language arts and mathematics (Grades 2-5 and 7) are taught. language arts is given extended instructional time due to the language and communication deficits of the hearing impaired. All language arts and mathematics classes are taught within the hearing impaired program classroom, with emphasis on individual or small-group instruction. There is no evidence that social studies or science is being taught. Because integration is a major goal, these courses should be incorporated into the program.

3.2 Individual Program Plans

Generally, the teacher is aware of the differences in academic and language levels of students and plans lessons to include activities selected to meet their needs; however, there is a lack of evidence that appropriate individual program planning is being done.

There is a need for assistance in identifying adequate standardized measurement instruments and other student evaluation techniques to assist with instructional planning. Assistance in this area should be obtained through consultation with hearing impaired specialists.

3.3 Speech and Auditory Training

Two of the students in the class are receiving two blocks of individual speech training per week from the hearing specialists. None of the other students receive the speech or auditory training program. If at all possible, all of these students should be provided with this training.

The classroom is equipped with an FM Auditory Trainer System for the use of the teacher and students. The teacher assisted by the hearing specialist, monitors the equipment on a daily basis to ensure that it is functioning properly. The provision of this equipment and the establishment procedures for its use are commended.

3.4 Integration

All six students are integrated into regular classrooms for specific subjects. This practice is commendable. However, there appears to be no formal criteria or integration profile in place to help determine a hearing impaired student's readiness for integration. The development of these criteria would be useful and would provide a means of determining whether the optimal level of integration is provided.

In most situations a teacher aide acting as an interpreter/tutor accompanies the hearing impaired child to the integrated classroom. At the time of this observation there was at least one student who regularly went into an integrated classroom placement without the assistance of an aide. This practice should be reviewed, and the provision of an aide to accompany students from this program into the regular classroom is encouraged.

Recommendations

It is recommended, for the Hearing Impaired Program in general, that the school:

1. Encourage teachers of this program to pursue deaf training courses particularly in the areas of language development for the hearing impaired and oral communication (speech training) if they do not have this training.

2. Consider providing in-service training opportunities for teacher aides for development of sign language competency, and training in areas of education of hearing impaired children. The Education Resource Centre and Grant MacEwan Community College can be contacted for training course opportunities.

3. Develop policy and guidelines for total communication instruction for the hearing impaired program at Crystal Park School. This would include a description of sign language instruction made for the classroom as well as oral communication goals (speech) for the children.

4. As much as possible, increase the amount of time for the Crystal Park hearing specialist to provide on-going consultation and monitoring services for the staff and pupils in the hearing impaired program. Areas of need include individual education program plan development and student evaluation to assist with instructional planning.

5. Develop criteria for determining integration readiness.

6. Provide systematic in-service training of regular classroom teachers regarding integration of hearing impaired students.

7. Provide speech and auditory training for all hearing impaired students.

8. Encourage contact with the communication specialist at the Alberta School for the Deaf regarding standardizing signs used in integrated and segregated classrooms.

9. Encourage liaison with resource consultants at the Grande Prairie and Edmonton Regional Offices of Education as well as subject area resource people in school jurisdictions such as Edmonton Public and Separate School Boards so to offset the isolation of working with this handicap.

10. Encourage the teacher and teacher aides to visit other programs where hearing impaired students receive elementary and junior high school course instruction.

It is recommended that in the areas of Assessment:

1. All specialists assessing hearing impaired students who use sign language be encouraged to develop competence in sign language skills.

It is recommended regarding teacher aides that:

1. Standards be established for sign language competency of teacher aides and other staff working within the hearing impaired program.

2. The services of a teacher aide be provided for every student integrated into regular classrooms.

PRESCHOOL INTERVENTION

At the time of this evaluation there were twenty children, ages two and one half to six years of age, eight enrolled in Preschool I and twelve in Preschool II. Both preschool classes had four teaching assistants and both classes were full day experiences. The children in the program have an array of handicaps, most bordering on the profound and dependent handicapped and most requiring constant attention both educationally and paramedically.

The children do not attend school on Mondays as this day is used for home visits, inservice conferences with specialists and planning. The responsibility for program planning, maintenance of IPPs, some in-service, and program evaluation lies with the certificated teacher. This teacher also coordinates the teacher assistants program with numerous therapies and services as well as being involved in considerable parent interaction.

Individualized Program Plans are fully developed for both Preschool I and Preschool II. The care, knowledge and understanding of IPP's would serve as a model for any program requiring IPP development. The IPP is obviously a tool that figures predominantly in the day to day programming for the child. Learner outcomes as well as teaching strategies are noted. Student evaluation is on-going, relevant and carried out as a regular component of the program. Those responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of IPP are highly commended. Excellent programming is being delivered to these children.

Aides are required to be consistent and knowledgeable in a variety of disciplines and services and are given considerable in-service to ensure quality programming for the child.

A variety of sources makes referrals to this program. A major source, the Coordinated Action Services for the Exceptional (CASE) team makes recommendations for children entering into this program after referrals from the numerous school jurisdictions in the intake area. There is always full documentation supporting the child's condition although, at this level of handicap and the child's age, it tends to focus on the medical needs for the most part. The teachers and aides have developed a wealth of knowledge and skills in incorporating this into an educational plan and program. Teacher assistants may also contribute greatly at the case conference stage.

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's program at every level of program development. The success of programming is interdependent, not teacher-dependent, and teachers, parents and administrators must continue to strive for optimum levels of commitment and continuity. Perhaps the school could consider entering into a contractual agreement with parents to ensure program and therapy continuity.

Integration of these children is attempted whenever possible given the childrens' ages and special needs. One of the preschool classes attempts integration of its younger children by bringing age-appropriate peers from the community into the setting to form a play group. At the time of this evaluation this mainstreaming program was still relatively new and only some informal evaluation has occurred. For all intents and purposes this component of the program is working very well both educationally and socially. No additional staff has been assigned to this play group setting. Staff members continue to have responsibility for the preschool children as well as supervising and interacting with the play group

children. Perhaps a formal evaluation is necessary in order to assess staffing needs.

Given the program components and knowledge that the ultimate responsibility for the success of the program lies with the certificated teacher, the Preschool I and Preschool II programs constitute a school unto themselves. The amount of teaching, administration, programming, supervising, coordinating, parent interaction and support therapy case conferences required places is a considerable workload on these individuals.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Teacher assistants become an integral part of the case conference.
2. Parent involvement in programming be studied with a view to improving or even contracting with parents to establish a commitment to the program and therapy continuity.
3. The mainstreaming of the younger children with age-appropriate peers from the community be formally evaluated and supervision levels and responsibilities be assessed.

RESOURCE ROOMS

The resource room programs in Crystal Park School are similar to most resource room programs for the learning disabled. In this school the resource rooms employ the same model of needs-based, pull-out programs used in most schools. The students receive programs that are challenging and appropriate. Additionally, certain programs employ novel innovations and some good teaching practices. A difference between these programs and the usual resource room is that, in this school students, only who are severely learning disabled are considered for this program. Students with mild learning disabilities are not considered as special education candidates and remediation is provided for those students within the regular program. **The staff and administration are commended for their commitment to the philosophy of the least restrictive environment.**

Three full-time teachers provide instruction for these programs in three resource rooms for students with severe learning disabilities. Each of these programs has a total of 13 to 15 students; however, because of integration, the number of students at any one time is significantly lower. Without integration these classroom enrollments would be considered large. The teaching load is further offset by the high level of teacher aide support provided and the narrow range of the students' academic abilities.

In some cases, aide support to these programs might be considered generous and the school administration has planned a review of this allocation. One class that was observed had three aides and a teacher to work with six students. It should be noted that of these six

students, four were additionally handicapped but they would not be considered "dependent." **The school board and administration are commended for providing for the special needs of students determined on an individual basis.**

The resource rooms offer programs providing appropriate instruction for their students and aspects of these programs would be considered to excellent models of teaching strategies. Of the many good teaching strategies observed the following are noteworthy:

-- Integration of SLD students for 40 to 60% of the time.

-- Planned use of computers with researched useful software.

-- Teaching word processing and the use of the computer as a tool to assist the students in their school program.

-- The willingness of teachers to given additional support to assist students in their integration; for example, reading teachers giving the regular test orally to students.

-- The amount of teacher time expended in the preparation and collection of useful teaching material.

-- Student goals developed in cooperation with the psychologist aide, and teacher.

-- The rigorous application of the criteria of SLD to ensure the least restrictive environment.

Administration of these services is well handled. Role descriptions, expectations, practices and guidelines for the resource room have been addressed. Consideration should be given to the following suggestions for improvement:

-- Increasing efforts to formally coordinate and share ideas, forms, and program strategies between the resource room

programs. Some of this is presently occurring but is dependent upon the friendships that develop between the teachers.

-- Developing placement and exit criteria to the point of common understanding and agreement.

-- Increasing the level of communication between special education teachers and all other staff members.

-- Considering the development of a high school program with the same philosophy and commitment to providing educational programs tailored to the special needs of students.

In summary, the resource room programs were found to be challenging, aligned with the school philosophy of special education and well-organized. Observations revealed that these services are beneficial and enjoyable to the students. The staff and administration are commended for their effort in planning and implementing these services. The commitment of the staff to providing the best possible educational program to each student is worthy of note.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Efforts be made to formally coordinate program procedures and share teaching strategies among the resource room programs.
2. Placement and exit criteria be developed to the point of common understanding and agreement.
3. Efforts be made to increase the level of communication among all staff members.
4. Consideration be given to planning a high school program with the same philosophy of special education.

APPENDIX

PARENT SURVEY

A parent survey questionnaire was sent to 118 parents (all) of special education students and 100 parents (sample) of non-handicapped students attending Crystal Park School. Thirty-nine percent of the Special Education parents questionnaires and 51 percent of the parents of non-handicapped students were completed and returned. These return rates are average for surveys of this nature. Sections A and B of the survey questionnaire as well as a tally of the responses to Section A and a summary of comments for Section B, are included.

PARENT SURVEY

Directions For Sections A & B

In these sections we are asking for your opinion about various aspects of Crystal Park School. You are asked to respond to each statement below by using the following scale:

Y -- Yes (Choose Y if the statement is usually or always true)

N -- No (Choose N if the statement is seldom or never true)

N/A -- (Choose N/A if the statement does not apply or you don't know)

Circle the responses which best describe your reaction to the following statements:

SECTION A	SPECIAL EDUCATION			NON-HANDICAPPED		
	Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A
1. I am aware of the policies of the school.	36	6	4	42	4	5
2. I am aware of the rules of the school.	38	4	4	43	5	3
3. My child has been treated fairly and consistently in terms of having to follow school policies.	39	1	6	47	0	4
4. My child has been treated fairly and consistently in terms of having to follow school rules.	41	1	4	46	1	4
5. I am encouraged to come to school to discuss my child's progress.	43	2	1	40	7	4
6. I feel welcome when I visit the school.	45	1	0	48	1	2
7. Teachers are available for consultation with me when the need arises.	42	1	3	42	5	4
8. The administration is available for consultation with me when the need arises.	38	1	7	29	4	18
9. I feel welcome to discuss school issues with the administrators of the school.	37	1	8	24	7	20
10. I feel that my views and opinions on school matters will be considered if I bring them to the attention of the school administrators.	41	1	4	24	6	21
11. I feel I can resolve my child's problems with the school through frank and open discussion with the administrators.	36	3	7	32	5	14
12. I feel that the school staff is interested in the welfare of my child.	45	1	0	45	3	3
13. I am treated as a partner in my child's education.	41	4	1	37	9	5

		SPECIAL EDUCATION			NON-HANDICAPPED		
		Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A
14.	I receive sufficient information about my child's progress during parent-teacher interviews.	38	0	8	42	5	4
15.	Report cards used by this school give me an accurate indication of my child's progress.	36	4	6	36	7	8
16.	I am satisfied with the present system of discipline in the school.	37	1	8	42	5	4
17.	The school helps to develop the social skills of students.	42	3	1	47	2	2
18.	I am satisfied with the education my child receives in school.	40	4	2	41	8	2
19.	I am satisfied with the general treatment my child receives in school.	44	1	1	44	5	2
20.	Non-teaching employees are helpful and friendly.	40	0	6	38	1	12
21.	My child has an adequate opportunity to experience extracurricular programs (i.e, concerts, sports, school plays, clubs, etc.)	38	3	5	44	2	5
22.	The level of integration of any child into the school is appropriate.	39	4	3	35	6	10
23.	I receive adequate information on my childs'handicap.	37	2	7	5	4	42

SECTION B

Please provide brief comments to questions 1 and 2.

1. What do you like most about the school?

_____

_____

_____

2. What do you think most needs to be changed?

_____

_____

_____

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION B

Section B of the Parent Questionnaire allowed for personal comment on: (1) The best features of the school and (2) The changes parents would recommend. A summary of the most frequent responses follows for parents of special education students and for parents of non-handicapped students:

1. The Best Features of the School

<u>Special Education</u>

AREA	FREQUENCY
- Appreciation for school and staff	18
- Appreciation for special education programs and support staff	12
- Integration	10
- Facilities	2

<u>Non-Handicapped</u>

- Integration	22
- Appreciation of school and staff	15
- Facilities	3
- School location	3
- School activities	2

2. Recommended Changes

<u>Special Education</u>

AREA	FREQUENCY
- need more integration	5
- change nothing	4
- need more staff	4

- need more professional support staff	4
- report cards	2
- better communication	2

Non-Handicapped

- better communication	7
- change nothing	6
- report cards	5
- more supervision	4
- reverse discrimination	4
- modify facilities	3
- reduce class sizes	2
- more discipline	2
- public use of pool	2
- reduce inservices	2

STAFF COMMENTS ON INTEGRATION

Positive Outcomes of Integration Noted by Staff

The staff observed the following outcomes:

-- The large degree of positive interaction between special education students and other students.

-- The appropriate behaviors of special education students modeled from other students.

-- The increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the capabilities and problems of special students.

-- The achievement of socialization goals mastered by the special education students.

-- The development of "buddies" (friendships) between special education students and other students.

-- The increased awareness of handicapping conditions by other students to the home.

-- The exposure of teachers to a variety of new teaching ideas and learning experiences.

-- The improved language among the special education students.

-- The reduced stigma of being "special" felt by handicapped students

-- The appreciation by regular students of the awareness that anyone can become handicapped.

Issues Relating to Integration Noted by the Staff

There is a need for:

-- A clearer definition of responsibilities of special education and of regular teachers is needed.

-- A need for more administrative monitoring of regular teachers' work loads.

-- Examination of the implications of overlap between the medical and educational needs of severely handicapped students.

-- Use of more specialist input when considering integration.

-- Determination of the appropriate degree of integration in academic relative to the functioning level of the student.

-- Expression areas of more clearly defined expectations of the therapists by the teachers when they are receiving integrated students.

-- A more concrete measure of the effectiveness of the integration process.

-- Improvement of communication to avoid the occasional breakdown of communication (due to work load/time) between teachers and all other staff involved.

-- Determining the cost effectiveness of different models of integration.

-- More parental input when deciding which model of integration should be used.

-- Determining the optimal size of regular classes in this special setting.

-- Examining the number of assistants in a regular classroom.

-- Solving the problem of a shortage of space when accommodating special equipment in the regular classrooms.

-- Addressing the need for more teacher preparation time.

-- Reviewing the appropriateness of having over half of the special student programs being carried out in segregated areas in the school.

-- Addressing the problem of gains in appropriate behavior by students not being transferred to other adults in the absence of the assistants.

-- Addressing the issue of providing the life skills program in isolation from the rest of the programs.

Strengths of the Program Reported by Staff

-- Willingness of the staff and students to take an active role in integration.

-- Flexible model of integration in which parents are seen as partners.

-- The enhanced opportunity is provided for handicapped children to reach their potential.

-- The cooperative attitude and dedication of the staff.

-- The positive results: the great improvements seen in some students.

-- The heightened community awareness of children with special needs.

-- The availability of therapists for program consultation and training.

-- The enhanced opportunities for positive interpersonal experiences for all children.

-- The willingness of the staff and administration to try recommendations made by other staff members and parents.

Weaknesses of the Program Reported by the Staff

-- The number of integrated handicapped students in a regular classroom is high.

-- The school mission statement is not specific enough.

-- In some cases integration occurs too quickly.

-- Inadequate recognition of the role of the teacher assistant.

-- The need for more communication among the large specialist staff.

-- A need for more specialist staff.

-- Teacher and therapist "burn out" due to self-imposed high expectations.

-- The large class sizes.

-- Inadequate coordination of meetings.

-- The time required for case conferences (however, these are seen as essential).

-- Insufficient use of community resources.

Future Directions for Integration Suggested by the Staff

-- Assisting all students to regular homerooms with special education classes operating on a pull-out resource model for individual needs.

-- Maintaining the present ratio of integration in the classrooms and setting a maximum number of handicapped students in a regular classroom.

-- Communicating the integration process and goals for each student.

-- Providing and encouraging increased parental input.

-- Encouraging more schools in the district to provide opportunities for integration, allowing Crystal Park to meet the needs of more children.

-- Becoming a community school.

-- Ensuring job and training placements are available in the community for handicapped students.

-- Expanding integration with increased emphasis on individualized instruction by regular staff.

-- Improving the staff attitude towards integration.

References

The following research articles describe educational ideas and strategies in place or that could be applied at Crystal Park School.

G. Johnson and Samuel Kirk. Are mentally handicapped children segregated in regular grades? Exceptional Children. 1950

Sociometric investigation noted that peer acceptance was lower than far normal children, and the degree of isolation increased with lower I.Q.

D. Macy and J. Carter. Comparison of a mainstream and self contained special education program. J. Special Education Vol 12 No. 3, 1978

Mainstream education was a viable alternative for the majority of sampled children. Teachers reported good adjustment and social integration of mainstreamed students.

J. Gottlieb. Mainstreaming, fulfilling the promise American Journal Mental Deficiency 1981 Vol 80, No. 2.

Long term educational improvement in academic, life and social adjustment is not apparent with mainstreamed children. Much work has to be done to reduce stigma and individualization in the mainstreaming. A thought provoking answer to L. Dunn's article.

E. Meyer. The Least Restrictive Environment Focus on exceptional children Vol. 12, No. 7, March 1980.

Most of the L.R.E. conditions do not exist in regular classrooms and these therefore become highly restrictive. The needed changes reflect special characteristics of educable students. Instructional variables to be considered for the LRE include: task oriented behavior, attention problems, peer social interactions and pupil-teacher interaction. Good article for issues related to LRE policy and programming.

L. Dunn. Special Education for the Mildly Retarded Exceptional Children September 1968.

The original blueprint for the move away from special classes for mildly educable children. There are many similarities in philosophy between Dunn's view and the philosophy at Crystal Park.

J. Greer. Functional Similarities of Learning Disabled and Mildly Retarded Students Exceptional Children September 1975.

There exists a large overlap of functional similarity of EMH/LD students which has a practical significance for programs, integration and labelling. As at Crystal Park what the child can do (phenotype) is more important than what the disability is (labelling - genotype).

G. Guerin and K. Szatlocky. Integration Programs for the Mildly Retarded Exceptional Children November 1975.

Four types of integrated classes are described including the combination class. Also a useful index of integration is described. A useful guideline.

W. Bronston. Concepts and Theory of Normalization from the Mentally Handicapped Child and his Family Chapter 30, 1975.

The normalization model demands the following issues be examined: physical setting, labelling, age, appropriate setting, integration and dignity of risk. These constitute useful ideas for policy and evaluation of program.